

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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DEPT PASS LABOR FOR STEWART

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, OECD

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WORK IN A CHANGING
SOCIETY, OCTOBER 15-18; AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVES'
REACTIONS

1. SUMMARY: CONFERENCE, SPONSORED BY OECD, WAS ATTENDED BY 140 DELEGATES REPRESENTING TRADE UNIONS (INCLUDING 2 FROM AFL-CIO), EMPLOYERS, THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT. TOO LARGE AND DISPARATE A GROUP ATTEMPTED TO COVER TOO BROAD AN AREA. PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE CONCLUSION WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON DESIRABILITY OF GREATER WORKER PARTICIPATION IN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING CONDITIONS OF WORK. OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AFL-CIO REP EXPRESSED SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE UTILITY OF SUCH MEETINGS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FOUR DAY CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 140 DELEGATES REPRESENTING ORGANIZED LABOR THROUGH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OECD'S TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TUAC), EMPLOYERS

THROUGH THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BIAC), THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENTS. USDEL INCLUDED MRS. ELIZABETH JAGER OF AFL-CIO (OCCASIONALLY JOINED BY AFL-CIO'S EUROPEAN REP IRVING BROWN, AS OBSERVER), RICHARD SHORE OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, JEROME ROSOW OF EXXON AND STANLEY SEASHORE OF U. OF MICHIGAN.

3. THE CONFERENCE THEME AND PURPOSE WAS TO IDENTIFY CHANGING NATURE OF "THE WORLD OF WORK", AND EVALUATE SUCH CHANGES TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES TO AVOID SEVERE SOCIO-ECONOMIC MISALLOCATIONS. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, INTER-ALIA, CONFEREES CONSIDERED:

- A) A BETTER EDUCATED WORK FORCE;
- B) CHANGES IN WORKER ATTITUDES;
- C) TECHNOLOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS WITHIN INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS;
- D) GREATER DEMANDS FOR WORKERS' PARTICIPATION; AND
- E) MORE LEISURE AND THE GROWTH OF LEISURE-ORIENTED INDUSTRIES.

4. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG MOST DELEGATIONS THAT:

- A) THE CONFERENCE WAS USEFUL IN BRINGING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS SECTORS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM;
- B) CONTINUING STUDY OF THE CONFERENCE THEMES IS WARRANTED; AND
- C) A STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO MEASURE, FOR EXAMPLE, WORKERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK AND WORK ENVIRONMENT, THEIR REACTIONS TO JOB-RELATED INNOVATIONS (I.E. JOB ENRICHMENT, PARTICIPATION, FLEXIBLE HOURS, ETC.), AS WELL AS ANALYSIS OF THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF SUCH INNOVATIONS.

5. OF MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE TO US INTERESTS WAS THE DIS-

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SATISFACTION WITH THE CONFERENCE EXPRESSED BY AFL-CIO REP JAGER, LARGELY BASED ON HER UNHAPPINESS WITH TUAC PRESIDENT'S DOCTRINAIRE ATTITUDE TOWARD PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. MRS. JAGER, TOGETHER WITH BROWN, REACHED AGREEMENT WITH TUAC OFFICIALS AND EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONISTS PRIOR CONFERENCE OPENING THAT DELEGATIONS WOULD ADHERE TO AGENDA AND AVOID REFERENCE TO ANY POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC SYSTEM. JAGER THEREFORE TOOK UMBRAGE AT STATEMENT IN OPENING ADDRESS BY TUAC PRESIDENT BACHE VOGNBJERG (DENMARK) THAT "WORKERS COULD NOT ACHIEVE ASPIRATIONS UNDER CAPITALIST SYSTEM". DURING CONFERENCE, JAGER ALSO COMPLAINED FREQUENTLY TO US DEL OF "RUDE AND HOSTILE TREATMENT" SHOWN HER DURING 1971 OECD TRADE UNION SEMINAR ON "INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ITS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS." ON THAT OCCASION SHE SAID EUROPEAN UNIONISTS ATTACKED US MULTINATIONALS, DOLLAR DEVALUATION AND AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL POLICIES. HOWEVER, COMPARING TREATMENT AFFORDED HER AT SUBJECT CONFERENCE TO THAT OF 1971, JAGER SAID THAT, APART

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FROM VOGNBJERG'S SPEECH, "THIS CONFERENCE WAS MUCH BETTER".

6. WHILE IRVING BROWN ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN TO US DEL OVER BACHE VOGNBJERG SPEECH, HE REMAINS CONVINCED THAT TUAC OFFERS THE AFL-CIO A CONTACT POINT WITH EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HIS PROPOSAL TO AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY THAT THE AFL-CIO RESUME PAYMENT OF ITS DUES TO TUAC. THIS PROPOSAL IS NOW BEFORE MEANY FOR DECISION. BROWN IS CONFIDENT THAT A NEGATIVE REPORT BY JAGER ON SUBJECT CONFERENCE WILL HAVE NEGLIGIBLE INFLUENCE RE AFL-CIO'S DECISION TO

RESUME ACTIVE TUAC PARTICIPATION.

COMMENT: BECAUSE OF THE BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECT MATERIALS AND USE OF PLENARY SESSIONS TO DISCUSS ALL ISSUES (AS OPPOSED TO SUB-GROUPS FOCUSING ON LIMITED AREAS), THE CONFERENCE APPEARED SOMEWHAT DISJOINTED. THIS VIEW ALSO SHARED BY SEVERAL DELEGATIONS.
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